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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2274
INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0190
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR 9353
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 6072
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY 1468
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 6726
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4363
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: SANTOS DEFENDS REYES OPERATION IN CONGRESS

¶1. Summary: On April 2, Minister of Defense Juan Manuel Santos testified to the House Plenary Commission in Congress on the Raul Reyes' operation and relations with Ecuador following the attack. Santos, along with Foreign Minister Fernando Araujo, reviewed GOC efforts to work with the Ecuadorians to combat the FARC prior to the operation, documenting Ecuador's lack of response to repeated GOC warnings of FARC activity in its neighbor's territory. Opposition Polo Democratico and the Liberal party criticized the GOC for allegedly deceiving the Colombian people about the operations. Santos said the GOC would reward individuals who provide intelligence on the location of FARC camps. End Summary.

¶2. Defense Minister Santos testified at the Colombian Congress on April 2 on the March 1 Colombian military operation against FARC Secretariat member Raul Reyes in Ecuadorian territory. Santos explained that the operation complied with international law as well as with the Colombian Constitution. He described a surgical operation planned by Colombia's armed forces and undertaken with the knowledge that there was little civilian presence in the area. Santos said the GOC learned of Reyes' location via an informant and not as previously reported through satellite imagery, cell phone use or a satellite phone call from Venezuelan President Chavez or the French government to Reyes. Opposition Polo Democratico Representative Wilson Borja claimed the GOC had lied about the operation's details and should be held responsible. Santos defended the operation claiming, "we do not counter illegal activity with more illegal activity."

¶3. Liberal Representative Guillermo Rivera raised concerns over Colombia's bilateral ties with Ecuador and cautioned the GOC to manage relations with a "cool head." Foreign Minister Araujo said the blame for the diplomatic crisis lay with both countries. Still, he explained that the GOC had repeatedly requested GOE action--as well as political, military, judicial, and intelligence cooperation--since mid-2007 to combat the FARC presence in Ecuador, but to no avail. Araujo added that following the resolution of the current crisis in the OAS, GOC will continue to appeal to the GOE for help in combating a common terrorist threat.

¶4. Santos reiterated on April 4 that information on the whereabouts of Reyes camp was provided through human intelligence. The GOC would reward the individuals involved. On April 4, the key informant who provided the GOC details on Reyes' whereabouts received 5 billion Colombian pesos (approximately \$2.7 million) in compensation. To date, this

is the largest amount paid to an individual who provided information on the whereabouts of a FARC member. The informant and his family are under protection of the GOC and plan to leave the country in the near future.

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